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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 SS-15 L-03
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INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

UNCLAS SANTIAGO 2131

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OGEN, PGOV, SHUM, CI
SUBJ: LETELIER/MOFFITT CASE: DEVELOPMENTS MARCH 23

REF: SANTIAGO 2127

1. SUMMARY. PRINCIPAL EVENTS OF MARCH 23, AS REPORTED SANTIAGO MEDIA, WERE MEETING AT FOREIGN MINISTRY TO ASSESS STATUS OF USG/GOC PROGRESS ON LETELIER CASE, GOC DECLARATION LATE IN DAY PUTTING FORTH ITS VIEWS OF CURRENT STATUS, USG LAWYER ETCHEBERRY'S FORMAL REQUEST TO JUDGE GONZALEZ FOR FERNANDEZ AND TOWNLEY TO APPEAR IN HER COURT, AND THE DEPARTURE OF ASSISTANT US ATTORNEY PROPPER FOR RETURN TO WASHINGTON. END SUMMARY.

2. MORNING MEETING IN OFFICE OF FOREIGN MINISTER CARVAJAL INCLUDED, FOR GOC, DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER VALDES, INTERIOR UNDERSECRETARY MONTERO, CNI HEAD MENA AND GOC LAWYER SCHWEITZER; FOR USG, AMBASSADOR, DCM, PROPPER AND ETCHEBERRY. SCHWEITZER TOLD PRESS AFTERWARD THAT EETING WAS PROMPTED BY PROPPER'S IMMINENT DEPARTURE AND WAS A GENERAL REVIEW OF PROGRESS TO DATE. ASKED IF IT HAD BEEN DEMONSTRATED THAT THE GOC HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE LETELIER ASSASSINATION SCHWEITZER REPLIED THAT THAT HAD ALWAYS BEEN HIS VIEW, BUT THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION IS WHAT THE USG THINKS. ON THE ISSUE OF WHETHER PROPPER IS SATISFIED WITH THE COOPERATION
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RECEIVED FROM THE GOC, SCHWEITZER STATED: "MR. PROPPER UNDERSTANDS THAT THERE HAS BEEN GOC COOPERATION, JUST AS WAS PROMISED IN THE UNITED STATES (I.E. THE MONTERO VISIT). BUT HE STILL HOPES THAT OTHER ACTIONS WILL BE CARRIED OUT, SPECIFICALLY IN CONNECTION WITH THE LETTERS ROGATORY."

3. AMPLIFYING THE GOC POSITION, THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR

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ISSUED AN EIGHT-POINT DECLARATION THE EVENING OF MARCH 23.
IN SUMMARY, AND INFORMAL TRANSLATION, IT SAYS:

-- ON MARCH 15 THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR INFORMED
JUDGE LIBEDINSKY THAT IT HAD THE WILLIAMS AND ROMERAL
PASSPORTS, AND ON MARCH 17 IT SHOWED THEM TO LIBEDINSKY.

--ON MARCH 20 LIBEDINSKY TOOK TESTIMONY FROM THE TWO
PERSONS CORRESPONDING TO THE PASSPORTS, DETERMINED THAT THEY
CAME UNDER MILITARY JUSTICE, AND THEREFORE DECLARED HIMSELF
INCOMPETENT TO CONTINUE WITH THE CASE.

-- ON MARCH 22 THE SAME TWO PERSONS WERE PRESENTED TO
JUDGE JUANA GONZALEZ IN RESPONSE TO THE LETTERS ROGATORY.
USG LAWYER ETCHEBERRY TOLD THE JUDGE THAT US ATTORNEY
PROPPER WAS NOT INTERESTED IN THE PERSONS WHO TRAVELLED
UNDER THE NAMES WILLIAMS AND ROMERAL ON CHILEAN PASSPORTS;
RATHER THAT THE LETTERS ROGATORY WERE DIRECTED TO THE
PERSONS WHOSE PHOTOS HAD BEEN ATTACHED. THE JUDGE ACCEDED
TO THE USG POSITION THAT QUESTIONING THE TWO PERSONS THEN
IN COURT WAS UNNECESSARY.

-- ON THE BASIS OF THE EVIDENCE PROVIDED THE COURTS,
THEIR OWN DECLARATIONS, AND INFORMATION RECEIVED BY THE
GOVERNMENT, "IT CAN BE AFFIRMED THAT THESE TWO PERSONS
HAD NOTHING WHATSOEVER TO DO WITH THE DEATHS OF MR. LETELIER
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AND MRS. MOFFITT."

-- REGARDING THE TWO PERSONS CORRESPONDING TO THE
PHOTOGRAPHS, CAPITAN FERNANDEZ HAS BEEN PLACED AT THE
DISPOSITION OF THE COURT; HE HAS NOT YET BEEN QUESTIONED
BECAUSE OF THE REQUEST OF THE USG LAWYER THAT HE APPEAR
AT THE SAME TIME AS MICHAEL TOWNLEY--"WHO, TO THIS DATE,
HAS NOT APPEARED BEFORE THE COURT."

-- "IT STANDS OUT CATEGORICALLY, ON THE BASIS OF
EVIDENCE NOW AVAILABLE, THAT THERE HAS NOT APPEARED ANY
LINK BETWEEN CHILEAN CITIZENS AND THE DEATH OF ORLANDO
LETELIER."
--"THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT BY THE ACTIONS
DESCRIBED ABOVE IT HAS COMPLIED IN ALL ASPECTS WITHIN
ITS POWER, AND CONTRIBUTED DECISIVELY TO CLARIFYING
THE FACTS -- AS IT HAD SAID PUBLICALLY IT WOULD DO."

--"NEVERTHELESS, WITH ITS CONTINUING CONCERN
TO PROMOTE JUSTICE, (THE GOC) REPEATS THAT IT WILL
PROVIDE ALL NEW ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE THAT MAY BE RELEVANT,
IN THE INTEREST OF THE AFOREMENTIONED OBJECTIVE."

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4. FOLLOWING UP WHAT HE HAD TOLD JUDGE GONZALEZ AT
MARCH 22 APPEARANCE OF "WILLIAMS" AND "ROMERAL" (REFTEL),
USG LAWYER ETCHEBERRY MADE FORMAL REQUEST TO GONZALEZ
MARCH 23 FOR APPEARANCE IN HER COURT OF MICHAEL TOWNLEY
AND CAPTAIN ARMANDO FERNANDEZ, AND THAT THEY BE QUESTIONED
JOINTLY.

5. ASSISTANT US ATTORNEY PROPPER DEPARTED SANTIAGO
FOR RETURN TO US NIGHT OF MARCH 23. HE MADE NO DEPARTURE
STATEMENT. IN ANSWER TO PRESS QUERIES HE SAID THAT USG
WAS INTERESTED IN FERNANDEZ, AS WELL AS TOWNLEY; HE NEITHER
DENIED NOR CONFIRMED THAT HE WOULD SOON RETURN TO CHILE.
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